

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1                    1.        A computer implemented method of managing electronic documents  
2 comprising:  
3                    storing a plurality of electronic documents in a database;  
4                    associating a first one or more of the plurality of electronic documents to a  
5 first case;  
6                    associating a second one or more of the plurality of electronic documents to a  
7 second case;  
8                    receiving a select signal from a user, the select signal selecting at least one of  
9 the second one or more of the plurality of electronic documents associated with the second  
10 case to be associated with the first case; and  
11                    associating the at least one of the second one or more of the plurality of  
12 electronic documents to the first case in response to the select signal.

1                    2.        The method of claim 1 further comprising displaying the second case  
2 and links to the second one or more of the plurality of electronic patent documents to a user.

1                    3.        The method of claim 1 wherein displaying the second case further  
2 comprises displaying a third case and links to a third one or more of the plurality of electronic  
3 patent documents to a user, the third case being associate with the third one or more of the  
4 plurality of electronic patent documents.

1                    4.        The method of claim 1 further comprising displaying document  
2 references for the first and second one or more of the plurality of electronic documents  
3 associated with the first and second cases, respectively, in individual rows of a first column,  
4 and displaying first and second case identifiers at the top of second and third columns,  
5 wherein the rows of the second column include a marker when the electronic document  
6 corresponding to the row is associated with the first case, and wherein the rows of the third  
7 column include a marker when the electronic document corresponding to the row is  
8 associated with the second case.

1                    5.        The method of claim 1 wherein the first case and second case are  
2 related cases.

1                    6.        The method of claim 5 wherein the first case and second case have a  
2 common inventor.

1                   7.       The method of claim 5 wherein the first case and second case have the  
2 same assignee.

1                   8.       The method of claim 5 wherein the second case relates to a  
2 continuation patent application of the first case.

1                   9.       The method of claim 5 wherein the second case relates to a  
2 continuation-in-part patent application of the first case.

1                   10.      The method of claim 5 further comprising displaying a search screen to  
2 search for additional cases related to the first case.

1                   11.      The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the plurality of  
2 electronic documents is an electronic version of a United States Patent.

1                   12.      The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the plurality of  
2 electronic documents is an electronic version of a foreign patent document.

1                   13.      The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the plurality of  
2 electronic documents is an electronic version of a publication.